



AIR POLLUTION CONTROL DISTRICT

NEGATIVE DECLARATION

PROJECT PROPONENT: Imperial County Air Pollution Control District

ADDRESS/LOCATION: 150 S. Ninth Street, El Centro, CA 92243

CONTACT PERSON: Monica N. Soucier, APC Division Manager

PROJECT NAME: IMPERIAL COUNTY 2013 STATE IMPLEMENTATION PLAN FOR THE 2006 24-HOUR PM_{2.5} MODERATE NONATTAINMENT AREA

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Imperial County 2013 State Implementation Plan for the 2003 24-Hour PM_{2.5} Moderate Nonattainment area plan (2013 24-Hr PM_{2.5} SIP) has been developed to meet the requirements of the federal Clean Air Act (CAA) for areas classified as "Moderate" non-attainment of the National Ambient Air Quality Standard (NAAQS) for the 24-Hour PM_{2.5}. The 2013 24-Hr PM_{2.5} SIP includes direct PM_{2.5} and its precursors NO_x, SO_x, VOC's, and ammonia. The Clean Air Act requires a PM_{2.5} SIP to address certain elements affecting an identified nonattainment area (NA). They are: 1) Emission inventory; 2) Attainment demonstration; 3) Transportation conformity budgets; 4) New Source Review updates; 5) an analysis of Reasonably Available control Measures and Technologies (RACM/RACT); 6) an assessment of Reasonable Further Progress (RFP); and 7) Contingency Measures. The PM_{2.5} SIP demonstrates that Imperial County would have attained the 24-hour PM_{2.5} standard "but for" emissions from Mexicali.

PROJECT LOCATION

The 2013 24-Hr PM_{2.5} SIP applies to Fine Particulate Matter less than 2.5 microns in aerodynamic diameter (PM_{2.5}) within the U.S. EPA designated nonattainment area (NA). The designation for the 2006 PM_{2.5} standard includes the majority of the populated area in Imperial County. The PM_{2.5} NA includes that portion of Imperial County which lies within the line described as follows: (San Bernardino Base and Meridian) Beginning at the intersection of the United States-Mexico Border and the southeast corner of T17S R11E, then north along the range line of the eastern edge of range R11E, then east along the township line of the southern edge of T12S to the northeast corner of T13S R15E, then south along the range line common to R15E and R16E, to the United States-Mexico border.

CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT (CEQA)

The 2013 24-Hr PM_{2.5} SIP is a "project" as defined by the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). Under CEQA a lead agency has the principal responsibility for carrying out or approving a project that may have a significant effect upon the environment. Since the SIP imposes the greatest discretionary authority of approval upon the ICAPCD it is therefore the lead agency for this project.

As part of the review process the ICAPCD examined the 2013 24-Hr PM_{2.5} SIP for applicability to CEQA. As directed by section 21084 of the Public Resources Code the Secretary for Resources identified a list of projects determined not to have a significant effect on the environment and which by their very nature are therefore exempt from the provisions of CEQA. The 2013 24-Hr PM_{2.5} SIP does not propose or impose any new regulation and essentially this 2013 24-Hr PM_{2.5} SIP demonstrates attainment of the NAAQS but for emissions from an international source class "8" categorical exemption applies. A Class "8" exemption describes those actions by regulatory agencies which assure the maintenance, restoration, enhancement, or protection of the environment where the regulatory process involves procedures for the protection of the environment. However, in order to provide for optimum public participation and involvement the ICAPCD opted not to utilize the exemption and instead provide an additional resource for the identification of any potential environmental impacts associated with the 2013 24-Hr PM_{2.5} SIP. In accordance with section 179B of the Clean Air Act, this 2013 24-Hr PM_{2.5} SIP satisfies the attainment demonstration requirements satisfying the provisions of subpart 1 and subpart 4 of the Clean Air Act.

REGULATORY BACKGROUND

In 1997 United States Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA) released two National Ambient Air Quality Standards (Standard) for particulate matter or PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5} with a standard of 65µg/m³. However, on October 17, 2006, U.S. EPA strengthened the primary and secondary 24-hour PM_{2.5} NAAQS from 65ug/m³ to 35ug/m³. As a result, the U.S. EPA designated Imperial County as "Moderate" Nonattainment for the 2006 PM_{2.5} NAAQS for the majority of the populated area in the district. Therefore, Imperial County is required to submit a PM_{2.5} SIP to the U.S. EPA by the end of December 2014.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

PM_{2.5} is an extremely small airborne particle. PM_{2.5} can penetrate deeply into the lungs of people who inhale them, where they can accumulate, react or be absorbed into the body. The overwhelming majority of airborne PM_{2.5} in Imperial County is primary PM_{2.5}. The major sources of primary PM_{2.5} are aircraft, fugitive windblown dust, with other contributions from entrained road dust, farming, and burning. PM_{2.5} and its precursors can transport hundreds or thousands of miles suspended in the atmosphere. The extent and direction of transport are affected by meteorological conditions and winds. The Imperial County PM_{2.5} SIP demonstrates that emissions originating in Mexico impacted the Calexico area during five exceedance days between 2010 and 2012. The PM_{2.5} SIP

demonstrates that Imperial County would have attained the 24-hour PM_{2.5} standard “but for” emissions from Mexicali.

PLAN DESCRIPTION

Under Title I of the CAA, U.S. EPA sets limits on how much of a particular pollutant can be present in the air for any given location within the United States. U.S. EPA, states, and local governments are required under the CAA to implement measures to prevent and control air pollution, with significant responsibility resting with the states. The major mechanism used to attain the standards is the SIP.

The 2013 PM_{2.5} SIP serves as a comprehensive planning document intended to provide guidance to the ICAPCD, the County, and other local agencies on the methods to demonstrate attainment of the 2006 PM_{2.5} NAAQS “but-for” transport of international emissions from Mexicali, Mexico.

Elements for the Imperial County 2013 PM_{2.5} SIP consist of the following:

- An emission inventory;
- 179B demonstration;
- Transportation conformity budgets;
- Updated New Source Review (NSR) rule;
- Analysis of Reasonable Available Control Measures and Technologies (RACM/RACT);
- Assessment of Reasonable Further Progress (RFP); and
- Contingency measures.